

**Written Testimony of Elizabeth Lane
Library Director, Town of Bloomfield**

Re: Senate Bill [1178: AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS](#)

March 9, 2023

Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, and distinguished Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly,

I am thankful for your time and attention to these important matters that impact the lives of every resident in our state, either directly or indirectly.

My name is Elizabeth Lane and I live in Bloomfield, Connecticut. I have the privilege of serving the wonderful community of Bloomfield as the Director of Bloomfield Public Library. I am also a working mom. I am speaking today in support of Senate Bill No. 1178: *An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days*.

I feel that this is such a common sense bill. In the wake of the great resignation and issues with employee retention, why would we not address the elephant in the room: poor employee benefits.

This is a social justice issue.

By voting YES to this bill, you are supporting women. You are supporting people of color. You are supporting a lot of people who do not make enough money to make ends meet. You are supporting a working mom who has to make the last minute decision to stay home with a child with a fever.

By voting YES you are taking the guesswork out of the current Paid Sick Days bill. Employees will not have to fight to be included under the short list of jobs covered. For instance, the Town of Bloomfield recognizes that part-time librarians are covered by the 2012 Connecticut General Statute 31-57r – Paid Sick Leave since the term librarian is included in the list of service workers covered. However, they do not extend the benefit to part-time library assistants, who in my opinion, are the living and working definition of a service employee. While they have always been frontline service workers in my eyes, the fact of this was further evidenced in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bloomfield Public Library is the library that never closed during the pandemic. Our curbside service went into effect within days of the state going into lockdown. Between March 2020 and May 2021, the library served over 13,000 patrons via curbside pickup. In addition to books and other materials, the library delivered printing, copying, and faxing through the curbside service.

The reason for that? Our library assistants who made sure our public received library materials in a safe manner on par with recommendations from the Bloomfield-West

Hartford Health District. In short, these workers, and by extension, all service workers should have the benefit of accruing paid sick time hours.

By VOTING yes you are allowing people to use their accrued benefits when they need them, not when they have worked the current mandated 680 hours. For a working mom working 25 hours a week, the 680 hours means she has to work 27 weeks before being allowed to use sick time. My question to you is this: can a kid wait 27 weeks to be sick? No!

Ironically, during the public hearing on this topic earlier today, I received a phone call from school and had to leave work and pick up a sick child for the first time this school year. Please allow all of my fellow service workers to accrue the benefit of paid sick leave. Please think of working families and VOTE YES for this common sense approach to earned sick leave.